

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MAPUTO 00078 201048Z

ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6623

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY VALLETA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN PRIORITY

USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 877

UNCLAS MAPUTO 0078

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: RH, MZ

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: JANUARY 19, PATRIOTIC FRONT PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: MAPUTO 077

1. SUMMARY: PATRIOTIC FRONT CO-LEADERS MUGABE AND NKONO ANNOUNCE ACCEPTANCE OF OWEN INVITATION FOR TALKS ON ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN AND PROPOSE MEETING IN MALTA JANUARY 26. THEY CONTEND THAT THEIR THREE DAYS OF TALKS IN MAPUTO HAVE PROMOTED UNITY OF PATRIOTIC FRONT. END SUMMARY.

2. PATRIOTIC FRONT CO-LEADERS TOBERT MUGABE AND JOSHUA NKOMO HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN MAPUTO JANUARY 19 CONCLUDING THREE DAYS OF TALKS. IN A PRELIMINARY STATEMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 MAPUTO 00078 201048Z

READ BY ZAPU DEPUTY SILUNDIAKA, THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ANNOUNCE ACCEPTANCE OF THE INVITATION ISSUED BY BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN FOR TALKS CONCERNING THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS, THE PF PROPOSED THAT THE MEETING TAKE PLACE IN MALTA ON JANUARY 26.

3. THE STATEMENT ALSO SAID THAT THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE PF HAD DISCUSSED "CONSOLIDATING THE UNITY OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT"

AND "FURTHER INTENSIFICATION OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE". IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, MUGABE SAID THAT UNIFICATION OF THE ARMIES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BUT NO DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED ON A PROGRAM FOR ACCOMPLISHING THIS.

4. NKOMO SAID THAT THE PF DECIDED TO ACCEPT OWEN'S INVITATION AFTER PREVIOUSLY REJECTING IT BECAUSE OWEN HAD CLARIFIED UK POSITION. NKOMO SAID THAT OWEN'S EARLIER STATEMENT ABOUT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT BEING A "STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION" RAISED DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER OWEN STILL STUCK BY THE PROPOSALS HE HAD MADE TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL. RECENTLY, NKOMO SAID, OWEN HAS ASSURED THEM THAT HE "DIDN'T WAVER, IS NOT WAVERING AND WILL NOT WAVER" IN HIS BACKING FOR THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. NKOMO ADDED THAT THE PF WOULD FIND OUT IN MALTA "WHETHER HE MEANS IT"

5. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, MUGABE DENOUNCED THE SALISBURY TALKS, SAYING THAT ONLY THE PF, REPRESENTING THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE, AND BRITAIN THE COLONIAL POWER HAVE THE "STATUS" TO ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS ON THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE, ANY VALID AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED BY THESE TWO PARTIES.

6. BESIDES MUGABE, NKOMO, AND SILUNDIKA, ZANU NUMBER TWO SIMON MUZENDA WAS AT THE SPEAKERS TABLE. NKOMO AND PARTY ARE RETURNING TO LUSAKA THIS AFTERNOON.

7. COMMENT: THE PRESS CONFERENCE LASTED ONLY 15 MINUTES, AND UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 MAPUTO 00078 201048Z

ONLY FOUR QUESTIONS WERE ASKED, ALTHOUGH THE PF LEADERS WERE WILLING TO STAY LONGER. EASTERN BLOC DIPLOMATS COMPLAINED THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE. ZANU REPRESENTATIVES HAD TELEPHONED THE US AND BRITISH EMBASSIES IN THE MORNING TO APPRISE THEM OF THE CONFERENCE. DE PREE

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